



**Morning Alert - Wednesday, March 29, 2017**

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## **HEADLINES**

### **Morning News**

NHK, TBS, and Fuji TV continued to give top play to reports on the fatal accident in which a group of high school students were hit by an avalanche in Tochigi Prefecture on Monday. NTV and TV Asahi led with reports that the Japanese national soccer team beat Thailand in a World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

All national dailies other than Nikkei gave top play to reports on a decision by the Osaka High Court to overturn an injunction to halt operations at two Takahama Nuclear Power Plant reactors in Fukui Prefecture. Nikkei led with a report on the GOJ's action plan on work style reform.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Japan decides not to participate in talks on Nuclear Weapons Convention**

All papers reported on Japan's announcement on Monday that it will not participate in the negotiations on the Nuclear Weapons Convention. Asahi wrote that Japan decided against trying to serve as a bridge between the nuclear and nonnuclear powers out of deference to the Trump administration, which plans to strengthen the nuclear capabilities of the United States. The papers also wrote that A-bomb survivors expressed strong disappointment with the GOJ's decision.

### **Japanese, Chinese officials share concern over "growing protectionism"**

Most papers wrote that Japan and China held a meeting of their vice trade ministers in Beijing on Tuesday. This was the first time for the two nations to hold such a meeting in five years. With the Trump administration's economic policy and Britain's decision to withdraw from the EU in mind, the Japanese and Chinese officials agreed that growing protectionism is a common concern for their nations.

## **Japan rebuts China's protest against official's visit to Taiwan**

Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on China's protest against an official visit to Taiwan last week by State Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Akama to attend an event to promote Japanese culture and tourism. Suga told a news conference on Tuesday that the visit was important for promoting economic and people-to-people exchanges between Japan and Taiwan.

## **Japan to extend sanctions on North Korea for two years**

Tuesday evening's Yomiuri wrote that the GOJ has decided to extend its unilateral sanctions on North Korea that are set to expire on April 13 for two years in response to Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile tests. Japan has been imposing punitive measures, including a ban on North Korean ships entering Japanese ports and a total ban on trade with the DPRK, since 2006.

## **GOJ expresses disappointment with U.S. court ruling on comfort woman statue in California**

Asahi wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the decision made on Monday by the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss an appeal filed by Japanese residents in California asking the top court to review a lower court ruling upholding the installation by the city of Glendale of a comfort woman memorial in a city park. Suga stated during a press briefing on Tuesday that the decision was very disappointing because the installation of comfort women statues runs counter to the GOJ's position on the comfort women issue.

# **SECURITY**

## **MSDF to conduct first-ever training for protecting U.S. warships**

Yomiuri front-paged a report saying that the U.S. and Japanese governments are making arrangements for MSDF vessels to conduct training for protecting U.S. military ships during peacetime for the first time. The MSDF plans to conduct the exercise during joint drills to be carried out with the U.S. Navy sometime between the spring and the summer. The paper speculated that the training, which will be carried out in accordance with the new security legislation, is aimed at demonstrating to North Korea and China the strong security cooperation between the U.S. and Japan.

## **LDP to recommend discussions on enabling Japan to attack enemy bases**

Asahi and Nikkei wrote that an LDP panel discussing Japan's missile defense capabilities led by former Defense Minister Onodera has drawn up recommendations to launch discussions at an early date on the possibility of Japan acquiring the capability to attack enemy bases. The panel plans to officially adopt the recommendations today and submit them to the GOJ in the near future.

# **ECONOMY**

## **Osaka High Court supports restarting halted Takahama nuclear reactors**

Most papers gave top play to reports on a decision made by the Osaka High Court on Tuesday to revoke a lower court order to halt operations at two nuclear reactors at the Takahama Nuclear Power Plant in Fukui Prefecture, accepting an appeal by Kansai Electric Power Co. against an injunction to halt operations at the reactors. The higher court said that quake-resistance standards set following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident are appropriate. The court decision will legally allow the utility to resume operating the two reactors that have been idled for about a year. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented at a press conference on Tuesday that the GOJ hopes that Kansai Electric will give top priority to safe operations at the plant and make every effort to obtain understanding from relevant parties.

## **GOJ agrees on action plan for work style reform**

All papers wrote that a government panel headed by Prime Minister Abe on Tuesday agreed on an action plan for work style reform, including a cap on overtime hours and equal treatment for regular and non-regular employees. Under the plan, overtime work should not exceed 100 hours per month even during busy seasons. The government plans to prepare legislation that will reflect the action plan and submit it to the Diet by the end of the year. However, Asahi wrote that it remains to be seen whether the action plan will be viable and help boost worker productivity. Abe told the panel that the action plan marks a historical first step in Japan's work style reform.

## **SCIENCE**

### **First-ever retinal cell transplant from another person's iPS cells performed in Japan**

All papers wrote that a team of RIKEN and other institutions performed on Tuesday a pioneering transplant surgery on a patient suffering from a retinal degenerative disease that often leads to blindness by using induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells grown from artificially derived stem cells taken from another person. Masayo Takahashi, a RIKEN researcher who heads the team, stated at a press conference that the surgery was an important step toward performing similar transplants on other patients in the future.